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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 03 KUWAIT 000147

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STATE FOR NEA/ARPI, NEA/PA, NEA/AIA, INR/NESA, R/MR, I/GNEA,  
B/BXN, B/BRN, NEA/PPD, NEA/IPA FOR ALTERMAN  
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SUBJECT: SPECIAL MEDIA REACTION: THE DEMISE OF KUWAIT'S  
RULER

¶1. Summary: All Arabic and English newspapers continued to dedicate the majority of each edition to the recent passing of the Amir. Some dailies published more photos of the Amir-designate, Shaykh Saad Al-Abdullah Al-Salem Al-Sabah, during his calls on various sites in Kuwait or with visiting heads of state. Al-Anbaa Arabic daily broke its silence with a special supplement about Shaykh Saad. End Summary.

Selected Headlines

¶2. Tuesday, January 17, 2006

-- Al-Qabas front page "Family agreement facilitates oath-taking. Consultative meeting of MPs touches on a number of proposals"; "Specifications of oath-taking"; "Speaker Al-Khrafi: Keen on enforcing constitutional procedures"

-- Al-Qabas p. 6 "Kings and leaders of states and governments, official personalities and popular delegations extend condolences on the demise of the late Amir"

-- Al-Qabas, p. 8 "Cheney arrives in Kuwait today"; "Dr. Ayed Al-Manaa: I am extremely happy for the transition of power pursuant to constitutional channels"

-- Al-Qabas, p. 19 "Citizens and expatriates visited Jaber Al-Ahmad's grave"

-- Al-Qabas, p. 21 "Al-Tabtabaei: Oath-taking is a prerequisite for completing procedures for naming Shaykh Saad as Amir"

-- Al-Qabas, p. 22 "Westerners share sadness with Kuwaitis"

-- Al-Qabas, p. 136 "Kuwaiti women express grief on demise of Amir"

-- Al-Rai Al-Aam front page "Oath-taking is key to powers of leadership"; "Al-Tabtabaei is for 'leniency' with respect to oath-taking"; "Al-Tabtabaei: Separation of posts of 'Crown Prince' and 'Prime Minister' is a reformist step but not a prerequisite"

-- Al-Rai Al-Aam p. 12 "Arab States eulogized Shaykh Jaber"

-- Al-Rai Al-Aam, p. 8 "Bayan Palace -- a United Nations"

-- Al-Rai Al-Aam, p. 14 "Kuwaiti embassies abroad received mourners"

-- Al-Rai Al-Aam, p. 15 "Palestinian community: We will never forget the Amir's support for the determination of `our occupied people'"

-- Al-Rai Al-Aam, p. 17 "Speaker Al-Khrafi: The oath should be taken pursuant to constitutional stipulations; the session will be open unless the government or ten MPs ask otherwise"

-- Al-Rai Al-Aam, p. 18 "Families cancelled receptions"

-- Al-Rai Al-Aam, p. 72 "Gulf, Arab and international dailies widely cover death of the Amir"

-- Al-Rai Al-Aam, p. 83 "Optimism about the new leadership"

-- Al-Watan, p. 7 "British Ambassador: The Amir's wisdom was evident during both good times and bad times"

-- Al-Watan, p. 18 "Kuwaiti families postponed their social events and occasions"

-- Al-Watan, page 34 "MPs continue to mourn the late Amir"

-- Al-Seyassah, front page "Speaker Al-Khrafi: No dispute on oath-taking by Shaykh Saad"; "Al-Khrafi will call for a special session within hours and demands for leniency in oath-taking procedures"; "Royal Family will hold important

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meeting this evening at Dasman Palace"; "Al-Saadoun boycotted the consultative parliamentary meeting and Al-Rashed stresses enforcement of constitutional provisions"

-- Al-Seyassah, p. 8 "'Oath-Taking Session' will be open and it will be held by next Monday"

-- Al-Seyassah, p. 39 "History will record that Jaber was fair to women"

-- Al-Seyassah, p. 40 "Amir was chosen as the International Charitable Personality of the year in 1995"

-- Al-Anbaa front page "Speaker Al-Khrafi: Oath-taking session should be held as quickly as possible. Al-Khrafi asserts clarity of article 60 of the constitution and MPs believe that the session will most probably be held at the beginning of next week"; "Cheney arrives in Kuwait today"

Block Quotes

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13. Tuesday, January 17, 2006

-- Mohamed Abdul Mohsen Al-Barjas wrote in the moderate daily Al-Qabas under the title "Departure of the Prince of Hearts": "The man, the ruler, the father has departed. Our hearts are full with sorrow as the `prince of hearts' departed this mortal life to the eternal life. By losing you Jaber we have lost all sense of joy. Moreover, how could the loyal people of Kuwait be happy when they have lost a kind father, a fair ruler, and a wise man? You were an Amir as well as a symbol of humility and dedication. Jaber Al-Ahmed, you have left behind men capable of steering the ship to the port of safety."

-- Dr. Shafiq Nazem Al-Ghabra, President of the American University in Kuwait, wrote in the moderate daily Al-Rai Al-Aam under the title "The absence of an Amir": "Shaykh Jaber led Kuwait through many political turns. At the outset of

his rule, he reorganized Kuwait administratively and financially, which contributed to the development of the modern state. Shaykh Jaber's era was littered with many sharp political and regional turns. The Iran-Iraq war began a few years after he was appointed. He had to deal with the ramifications of that war, as well as, those of the Iranian Revolution. At that point in time, he stood firmly against allowing Kuwait being swept up in the violence of the region and he almost lost his life as a result of his courageous stance. He was not a fan of violence or dictatorship, he was humble and pious. The Iraqi invasion in 1990 was a great shock to Shaykh Jaber. After all that he had given Saddam's government during the Iran-Iran war, and after the terror Kuwait faced as a result of its support for Iraq during that war, Shaykh Jaber stood in awe of the magnitude of this betrayal to Kuwait. He also achieved great strides on the domestic political front, as it was he who dissolved the National Council in 1986 unconstitutionally when it was unable to work with the government. It was he who also refused the same type of action without the proper constitutional means. It was his adherence to the constitution that shaped Kuwait as an organization-based state. That is why Kuwait can still follow his teachings in its quest to strengthen democracy while enacting political and economic reform."

-- Ahmed Mohamed Al-Fahd wrote in the moderate daily Al-Watan under the title "The impolite ones": "It was a sad evening in Kuwait after the burial of everyone's father, Jaber Al-Ahmed. Sadly, all countries Arab and non-Arab felt the sorrow that some impolite people did not. Some shop and caf owners opened yesterday not caring for the great calamity and not accounting for the citizens' feelings for the death of their father and their leader. Of course, there are stores that must remain open out of necessity because people need them such as grocery stores, drug stores, and restaurants. The Ministry of Commerce should punish other shops owners that remained open while they used to close on religious holidays. These shop owners should be punished for

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their disrespect of the event. I do not want my words to be understood as incitement against certain types of shops as much as I want them to be a warning to some owners that do not care what happens in Kuwait, so long as they ravish what is in the pockets of its citizens. Kuwait will not force them to close their shops and will not revoke their licenses because it is not a barbaric state."

-- Dr. Shamlan Al-Eisa wrote in the pro-government daily Al-Seyassah under the title "The peaceful transition of power": "The massive crowds that came out to bid farewell to their beloved departed Amir is clear evidence of the people's close ties to their political leadership and a distinct declaration of their renewed loyalty to the legitimacy of the Al-Sabah family. Declaring Shaykh Saad Al-Abdullah Al-Salem Al-Sabah as Amir of Kuwait at this time is clear evidence of the regime's respect for the constitution and the traditions. The new Amir will follow in the footsteps of the previous Amir, as they were companions. As soon as the Amir was buried a question rose in Kuwait and outside it; who will be named Crown Prince? Although the constitution provides the Amir with a year to select his Crown Prince, the current domestic, regional, and international situation urges the quick selection of a Crown Prince. We have complete confidence in the ruling family has the qualified people who will facilitate the best selection."

-- Sami Abdul Latif Al-Nesf wrote in the moderate daily Al-Anbaa under the title "The Great Kuwait beloved has gone": "The beloved Amir Jaber Al-Ahmed has gone, the one to whom the people pledged allegiance twice, the one famous for his wisdom, humility, and mercy. The one who led the nation with great ability amidst storms forced upon us by geography and location. The policies, which the departed Amir believed in and the great work that he did domestically, regionally, and

internationally are what contributed to the salvation of Kuwait from the biggest catastrophe in its history. Had it not been for the investments and funds for future generations, the Kuwaiti people would not have been able to hold up against the invasion both domestically and internationally. We offer the sincerest condolences to the family, to the loyal Kuwaiti people, to the Arab, Islamic, and international communities."

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